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ABSTRACT

A collection of six papers is preceded first by an introduction stating the editor's abhorrence of corporal punishment and his motives for assembling the papers; and then by the American Psychological Association's statement opposing the use of corporal punishment. Irwin A. Hyman and Delores M. Lally consider religious and other historical factors in "Corporal Punishment in American Education: A Historical and Contemporary Dilemma." Adah Maurer in "The Case Against Physical Punishment in Schools" advances reasons why corporal punishment is both damaging to children and ineffective in its aims. John R. Cryan and Jamie Smith in "The Hick'ry Stick: It's Time to Change the Tune" examine relevant court cases and offer suggestions for changing school policies. Morris A. Wessel in "The Pediatrician's Perspective on Corporal Punishment" describes how adults tend to reproduce in their interpersonal relationships the violence that they experienced in their childhood. Gertrude J. Rubin Williams in "Corporal Punishment: Socially Sanctioned Assault and Battery" aims to sensitize all persons to the damages and irrationalities she sees in corporal punishment. John E. Valusek in "People Are Not for Hitting and Children Are People Too" argues that violence is not inevitable. The first five papers each contain a bibliography. (MLF)

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Corporal Punishment in the Schools: Its Use is Abuse

John R. Cryan
Editor

EA 014 625

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INTRODUCTION

Some time ago I read about a ten year old boy who had died of a blood disease. His father was commenting that school authorities who knew of the fatal disease still felt compelled to spank the boy on more than one occasion for talking in class. I was sickened, as was the father, to discover that teachers and administrators would rather use a weapon to beat a sick boy than work out an alternative.

Issac Asimov once said "Violence is the last resort of the incompetent." Is that the state of affairs in education today? Can we continue to give benighted status to corporal punishment in schools when the practice clearly makes no sense educationally or psychologically?

The case against corporal punishment is a powerful one but it will take more than just potent arguments to awaken educators and all other citizens to the routine abuse of children in our schools. Parents must protest, organize, and document all cases involving child beatings. Organized groups must work with school boards, city councils and state legislatures to find out where the power lies to abolish corporal punishment. Intensive lobbying, frequent publicity and support from such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union, psychologists and psychiatrists, and educators will assure the necessary votes for passage if—*if* someone cares—*if* someone builds the case—*if* someone follows it all the way through. Remember, those being beaten can't vote.

The 1981 **Educational Comment** is one of the very few sources on corporal punishment in American education. It is my hope that additional efforts will be stimulated by its contents.

I wish to thank the faculty committee in the College of Education for selecting my proposal to edit the issue around this extremely important topic. Thanks also go the typists for their patience, my wife for her editorial assistance, and Tammy Billups and my "never been spanked" daughter for the cover design.

John R. Cryan, *Editor*
June 1981

A STATEMENT ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

This statement on corporal punishment was adopted as a resolution by the Council of the American Psychological Association at its January 1975 meeting.

WHEREAS: The resort to *corporal* punishment tends to reduce the likelihood of employing more effective, humane, and creative ways of interacting with children;

WHEREAS: It is evident that socially acceptable goals of education, training, and socialization can be achieved without the use of physical violence against children, and that children so raised, grow to moral and competent adulthood;

WHEREAS: *Corporal* punishment intended to influence "undesirable responses" may create in the child the impression that he or she is an "undesirable person"; and an impression that lowers self-esteem and may have chronic consequences;

WHEREAS: Research has shown that to a considerable extent children learn by imitating the behavior of adults, especially those they are dependent upon; and the use of *corporal* punishment by adults having authority over children is likely to train children to use physical violence to control behavior rather than rational persuasion, education and intelligent forms of both positive and negative reinforcement;

WHEREAS: Research has shown that the effective use of punishment in eliminating undesirable behavior requires precision in timing, duration, intensity, and specificity, as well as considerable sophistication in controlling a variety of relevant environmental and cognitive factors, such that punishment administered in institutional settings, without attention to all these factors, is likely to instill hostility, rage, and a sense of powerlessness without reducing the undesirable behavior;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the American Psychological Association opposes the use of *corporal* punishment in schools, juvenile facilities, child care nurseries, and all other institutions, public or private, where children are cared for or educated.

THE AUTHORS

John R. Cryan is Associate Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education at The University of Toledo. His research and writing focus upon teacher-child interactions with special emphasis upon preschool and kindergarten classrooms. He is a frequent consultant in schools where he conducts workshops and inservice training sessions on classroom management, alternative discipline strategies and effective relationship building. He has published articles in several professional journals, and currently serves as a reviewer for **Dimensions** and **Childhood Education.** He was recently chosen to be Research editor for **Childhood Education.**

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* * * * *

Delores Lally is a Ph.D. candidate in School Psychology at Temple University and a research associate at the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools. Ms. Lally has been a college admissions officer and more recently an intern in School Psychology at the Irving Schwartz Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

* * * * *

Adah Maurer is Executive Director of End Violence Against the Next Generation, and editor of the non-profit organization's newsletter, **The Last Resort.** Dr. Maurer is a former school teacher and school psychologist. She has recently authored **Paddles Away,** published by R & E Research Associates of Palo Alto, CA.

* * * * *

Jamie Smith is Associate Professor of Early Childhood and Gifted Education at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Her major interest lies in the development of curriculum for early childhood teacher education. She is a frequent presenter at national conferences, most recently at the World Conference on Gifted Education and has published articles in the **Kappan** and **Humanistic Educator.**

John E. Valusek has spent the past seventeen years crusading against corporal punishment. Until recently he was a practicing psychologist and before that a university professor and public school teacher. The slogan "People are not for hitting, and children are people too," has been the subject of his current full-time speaking schedule. His frequent presentations and workshops on the "Seeds of Violence" take him all over the United States. When not travelling Dr. Valusek finds the time not only to write but also to publish his material.

* * * * *

Morris A. Wessel, M.D. is a pediatrician in private practice in New Haven, Connecticut. Additionally he is Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Wessel is a frequent speaker and author on the topic of corporal punishment. He has written numerous newspaper and journal articles. He currently serves as Consulting Pediatrician for both the New Haven Board of Education and the Clifford Beers Child Guidance Clinic.

* * * * *

Gertrude J. Rubin Williams, is a Diplomate in Clinical Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology and a fellow of the American Psychological Association. She is currently engaged in private practice in St. Louis, Missouri, where she is also on the faculty of Webster College. She is a past president of the Section on Clinical Child Psychology of the American Psychological Association and was a member of the Association's Task Force on Children's Rights. Formerly editor of the **Journal of Clinical Child Psychology**, she is a consulting editor for numerous professional journals and has written extensively on children, the family, and society. Her recent publications include a book (with John Money), **Traumatic Abuse and Neglect of Children at Home** published by The Johns Hopkins University Press, and "Children in the 21st Century" (editor and contributor), a special issue of the **Journal of Clinical Child Psychology.**

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN AMERICAN EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DILEMMA

by Irwin A. Hyman and Dolores M. Lally

For most of the American public, discipline is synonymous with punishment. And punishment, in regard to children and youth, frequently connotes hitting. In fact, hitting children to change their behavior is a cherished American tradition. It is defended vigorously, with conviction, and even with religious fervor as a right and responsibility of American parents and educators. This paper will discuss both historical and contemporary practices in relation to the use of corporal punishment in American schools.

Virtually all citizens have been disciplined both at home and school, and therefore, consider themselves experienced if not expert on the subject of discipline. Discipline is a subject which cuts across almost all aspects of life. Discipline is associated with the foundations of the Judeao-Christian religious ethic. Discipline is an important part of religious sanctions in regard to morality. Discipline is a major aspect of the Puritan work ethic in that each of us must discipline ourselves to work hard. Discipline frequently becomes a political theme as politicians of the right emphasize the importance of "law and order" in our society. In fact, the judicial system is apparently going through an upheaval as many jurists and the public are pushing towards harsher discipline through the elimination of rehabilitation models and the use of punishment models to deal with criminal behavior. At the time this chapter is being written the very fabric of our economy is affected by the political belief that we must exercise economic discipline by not spending money, but by investing and saving. It is no wonder that the topic of corporal punishment is so closely associated with the emotional roots of our very beings. The emotionality of the variety of beliefs regarding discipline tends to make the public resistant or immune to rational and scientific argument regarding the use of corporal punishment in changing children's behavior.

The staff at the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools (Center) has exhaustively reviewed the literature on discipline and punishment. The overwhelming evidence from psychological and educational research indicates that punishment is ineffective, inefficient and counter-productive as a method of changing children's behavior (Bongiovanni, 1979; Hyman, McDowell and Raines, 1977). Recent and ongoing research efforts at the Center continually support the need to disseminate information on methods of prevention to eliminate the perceived need for punishment. When punishment is necessary, the judicial use of withdrawal of privilege and possibilities for restitution have an overwhelming superiority to

the use of corporal punishment. Other papers in this volume will deal in more detail with rationales for the elimination of corporal punishment and some of the concomitant research. The following will present some historical factors that led to the contemporary practice of corporal punishment in American education. At the end of this paper we will endeavor to indicate some problems in changing the behaviors of educators. First, however, history cannot be considered without a brief consideration of the religious influences.

Religious Roots

The rationale for the use of corporal punishment reaches to early scriptures. Solomon is often quoted in his admonition that "he who spareth the rod spoileth the child." The story of Solomon is a good example of the modeling effect which is so well demonstrated in current research on aggression. Solomon's use of corporal punishment on his own children resulted in the tragic tale of his sons who ended up fighting and destroying each other. The Judaic admonition is often quoted by both Orthodox Jews and Fundamentalist Christians. The added element in the tradition which has ended in the use of corporal punishment in the Anglo-Saxon world is the Calvinistic or Christian concept of children being born into sin. From early Colonial days school masters were admonished to beat the devil out of children, as God not only sanctions but mandates that children be punished in order to develop good character. Modern day Fundamentalists, especially in many of the so-called "Christian schools," are rabid supporters of the use of corporal punishment of children. It is difficult to convince people whose beliefs are based on religion that the shaping of personality and character as we understand it from developmental psychology contraindicates the use of hitting. If God mandates the beating of children in Christian schools, then there is really no argument since it is a matter of faith rather than consideration of research evidence. Research indicates that religious beliefs have definite influence on the use of corporal punishment and that the more fundamental, orthodox groups tend to use spanking more in their homes than do moderate and liberal branches of any faith (Erlanger, 1974). It is interesting that in modern times the Catholic schools, which have a long history in the use of corporal punishment of children, have begun to change. For instance, in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Parochial schools are forbidden to use corporal punishment while often in the public schools it still occurs.

In summary, while most modern Americans, despite their religious convictions, would disavow the belief of the innate evilness of children, they still continue to support the practice of hitting children without a real knowledge of how the roots of this practice are antecedent to modern day belief.

Historical Factors

Early colonial schools were often associated with religious philosophies focusing on character development and morality. Curricula were usually dull and the typical class day consisted of drill, repetition, and recitation in

uncomfortable surroundings. Behavioral expectations were generally extensive, well defined and static for many decades. For example, in 1840, the principal of a prominent Boston boys school required that the boys scrape their feet on the scraper, be punctual, and bow when entering or leaving the room, when reciting, or when accepting anything. Classroom regulations specified that they sit erect, stand when speaking, and carry their books in a satchel. Borrowing or lending, climbing, balancing a pen on the ear, spitting on the floor, and leaving a seat without permission were uniformly prohibited (Manning, 1979). Historical accounts of schools since those days further reinforced the tradition of the birch rod and the children sitting for long periods of time in rigid postures.

The consequences of non-conformity were clearly delineated in colonial schoolhouses. One example is the following list of contingencies implemented in a North Carolina school over a century ago: "For boys and girls playing together, four lashes; for failing to bow at the entrance of strangers, three lashes; for blotting copy book, two lashes; for scuffling, four lashes; for calling each other names, three lashes," (Manning, 1979). In her *Reminiscences* of 1851, Elizabeth Montgomery outlined practices common in Mrs. Way's Girls School: if a girl allowed her head to fall forward she was forced to wear a necklace of sharp Jamestown weed burrs, strung on tape. When a student slighted her assignments she was forced to wear leather spectacles, "but a morocco spider worn on the back, confined to the shoulders by a belt, was more usual" (Manning, 1979). But behavior in colonial schools is evidence of current research that suggests that aggression results in counter-aggression. In truth, one is reminded of the story of Ichabod Crane in **The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.** The disciplinary procedures used by Ichabod Crane, resulting in aggression against him by the town roughnecks, is a good illustration of the constant struggle between the school master and the children. Both had to deal with rigid rules, uninteresting curriculum and a belief in punishment as a necessity in the pedagogical process.

Legal Factors

The argument for the use of corporal punishment in the schools is based on the concept of *in loco parentis.* This concept spells out the responsibility of teachers to assume the mantle of parenthood in the absence of the parent. The practice derived from English law when the wealthy hired tutors to teach with their children. If the tutors weren't satisfactory, the parent could easily fire them. While this approach was very useful at one time, it is questionable in the modern, bureaucratic system which insulates school personnel from parents. For instance, in two separate rulings, parents have received different interpretations of the *in loco parentis* concept in regard to the hitting of their children by teachers. In the *Baker* v. *Owens* (1975) case in North Carolina, the court affirmed the right of the state to use corporal punishment in order to maintain order in the classroom. In essence then, the court ruled that the interests of the state outweigh the interests of the individual parents, thereby

invalidating the *in loco parentis* concept which originally gave parents the right to give or take away parental authority over their children. In *Glaser* v. *Marietta* (1972) in the state of Pennsylvania, the court came to the opposite conclusion. They felt that the parent's right to responsibility over the bodies of their children outweighed the right of teachers to use corporal punishment. Therefore, in Pennsylvania a parent may stop the schools from hitting their children. Finally, in a suit which was based on the Fourteenth and Eighth Amendments, the United States Supreme Court *(Ingraham* v. *Wright,* 1977). refused to deny teachers the right to hit children.

In a 5 to 4 decision the majority of the court ruled that children in schools are not protected by the "cruel and unusual" clause of the Constitution, nor are they entitled to procedural due process. Currently a case in West Virginia (*Hall* v. *Tawney,* 1981) represents the last legal challenge to give children constitutional protection against the use of corporal punishment. The District Court in that case ruled that substantive due process was denied when a child was paddled in excess of any reasonable connection between the misdemeanor and the extent of the paddling.

In a review of press clippings by Clarke, Liberman-Lascoe, and Hyman (1980), evidence suggested that courts will not in general be supportive of parents' rights. Therefore, it is evident if children are to be safeguarded from the excesses of corporal punishment, which are well documented in that review, it will be up to local school districts and state legislatures to ban the use of corporal punishment. This has been accomplished in Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts and New Jersey and in many school districts. The evidence available indicates that there is no greater incidence of other disciplinary actions in those states or schools which have abolished corporal punishment than there is in other settings where corporal punishment is used.

Contemporary Factors

Despite the aforementioned body of research countraindicating the use of corporal punishment in schools, we continue to find most educators still believe that corporal punishment should be available as a "last resort." While some might be puzzled by this current attitude, the historical and legal aspects, which have been discussed, certainly contribute to our understanding. However, there are also other factors which must be considered. A review of economic, social, political and pedagogical forces in American society will clearly demonstrate the effects of economic stress on the institutions and fabric of the American culture. In times of economic stress the American public demonstrates some interesting shifts toward: 1) more conservative political and social ideology, 2) an increasing interest in Fundamentalist religious beliefs, 3) a greater interest in the occult and superstition, and 4) a greater interest in movies and literature which offer themes of escapism (Hyman, 1978). The current political shift toward a more conservative ideology, the emphasis on "back to basics," and the concern of the American public over

violence in schools, indicate that we are currently in a period of punitiveness toward children. In fact, the 1980's might be characterized as the decade of punitiveness and violence toward children. Financial cuts in educational programs, increasing reports of child abuse and juvenile delinquency, and the lack of rehabilitation and adequate programs all add up to an atmosphere fostering feelings of anger toward children and youth. Adults, especially older groups, are increasing in percentage of the population and are going to be more and more severe and harsh towards children. Competition between youth and the increasing elderly population will add to the tendency of not only a generational gap, but a generational war for diminishing resources.

Those who were very concerned about the increasing abuse of children in the world in relation to political upheaval, increasing numbers of refugees, and massive starvation, organized the International Year of the Child in 1979. A Children's Bill of Rights was introduced and there was a great deal of activity in the media, educational institutions, etc. Despite the efforts of many well-intentioned citizens, not only in America but in the entire world, it is evident that the goals set by the International Year of the Child have little hope of being accomplished.

Several surveys conducted by the Office of Civil Rights on a somewhat limited sample, and based on reported cases of corporal punishment by the school districts involved, indicate that in 1976, there were at least one and a half million cases of corporal punishment. It must be remembered that this is probably just the tip of the iceberg, because these reports are based on formal written accounts of corporal punishment and those that school districts were willing to report on a form sent by the Federal Government. A subsequent survey by the Office of Civil Rights in 1979-80 indicated that there were again large numbers of cases reported.

Problems and Prevention

The previous sections of this paper have outlined various aspects of the problem of the use of corporal punishment in public education. There are a number of reasons, other than those discussed, why corporal punishment should be eliminated. Probably the major reason is the fact that the use of corporal punishment in the schools is an officially sanctioned form of punishment that leads to child abuse. When we sanction the use of hitting children, some people hit children harder, the worse they behave. Eventually, hitting loses its deterrent effect or it becomes so abusive that some children are murdered. While it is difficult for some to see the connection between a few swats on the fanny and the death of children, it is also evident that if people did not think of hitting children to change their behavior or to release the adult's frustration, they would not think of hitting them harder and more often. Additionally, factors such as the economic stress that waxes and wanes in our society, the number of single parent family units, the consequent economic and social stress of divorce on those units, relate either directly or indirectly to child abuse (Gelles, 1979). The cycle is complete as many of these factors relate to

teacher stress, which has been shown to be related to the breakdown of schools, the flaring of tempers and the resort to the use of corporal punishment. There are, therefore, some strong societal arguments for beginning to educate the upcoming generation to the necessity of not hitting children and to teach them the many available techniques for changing children's behavior. The goal of prevention should be a major focus for advocates against the use of corporal punishment in schools.

Research by Hyman and Lally (1980) indicates that there are many programs available for teaching both parents and educators effective means of controlling children. It is evident that the complete elimination of corporal punishment will not occur if we depend on the courts, legislatures, religious groups, educators, or professional organizations. The question is, "How do those with the information convince educators to seriously embark on a massive program of pre-service and in-service training of teachers and future parents in the great variety of effective and humane disciplinary procedures?" The goal of advocates who wish to eliminate corporal punishment of children in the American society is to organize a massive campaign in the media and through the educational system. This is not an easy task. It will probably take two generations of parents and teachers to learn that children can be raised successfully without the use of hitting. The difficulty of such an effort is typified in the incident described in the next section. It is an example of the kind of dilemma that occurs when systematic efforts are made to change a school's attitude toward the use of corporal punishment.

Advocacy vs. Consultation

This is a brief account of an instance that occurred in a school district where the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools was involved in a massive effort of in-service training in effective methods of discipline. The incident occurred in a state where corporal punishment in schools is forbidden. The Center staff had been employed by an urban school district to work with all levels of educational personnel in implementing effective methods of discipline. Work included consultation, the collection of data on effective disciplinary procedures, and in-service training of teachers. The case in point occurred when a staff member from the Center had been asked by the principal of an elementary school to consult with a teacher who was having many problems with discipline. The consultant went the first day to observe the classroom for a short period of time. On the occasion of consultant's second observation, a person unknown to her came to the classroom, talked to the teacher and then asked that a young boy be brought to the front of this fourth grade class. The young boy was brought forward, and the person took off his belt and whipped the child eight or nine times in front of the class. This resulted in the child screaming and crying to the extent that he was heard throughout that floor of the building. The teacher then thanked the person for applying this severe form of discipline. It was apparent that the child, who did have a behavior problem, had not done anything immediately

preceding the whipping. The consultant was shocked and didn't know quite what to do. She asked who the person was, and the teacher said that the person was a local minister who knew the foster family of the child. The whipping had occurred with the teacher's and foster parent's approval. The minister had administered this beating as a result of the child's previous misbehavior. Being somewhat shocked by this collusion between the minister and the teacher, the consultant went to the principal who informed her that he would do nothing about this incident since it is only illegal for school staff to hit children in schools.

By the end of the day this incident was known by all of the teachers and the child study team personnel. Discussion revealed that many of the teachers were in favor of the hitting of children in school despite the state law against it. A minority of the teachers, those who considered themselves child advocates, were described by the others as "bleeding heart liberals."

The incident reported occurred in a school where discipline was handled quite well by many of the teachers. It is clear that in this particular situation, the teacher was having great difficulty. The dilemma which this point illustrates is the conflict between the role of the consultant, a helper who does not interfere in the system, and the role of the advocate, who feels the need to immediately stop something that is patently illegal and detrimental to the child. Without developing further details of what happened as a result of this incident we urge you the reader to contemplate the issues described and what you would do if confronted with this situation. Needless to say, these kinds of occurrences happen daily in American schools. They make it very difficult for educators who oppose corporal punishment to implement their programs. However, a heartening aspect of this situation is, that while 70 to 80% of teachers in a number of surveys favor the use of corporal punishment, an even larger number indicated that they were interested in training in more effective procedures (Hyman, McDowell, and Raines, 1977).

Summary

In summary, it is evident that the use of corporal punishment in American schools is as sacred as apple pie and the American flag. A long historical, religious and political tradition will be hard to eliminate, despite all the research on the effectiveness of other more humane procedures. The hope for the future lies in a concerted effort by advocates, public relations people, media people, researchers, psychologists and educators to mount a massive effort to convince the American public that there are more effective ways to change children's behavior. It is hoped that this short paper will stimulate those who read it to investigate this area further and take an active interest in publicizing those methods that would discipline children in an effective and humane way.

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THE CASE AGAINST PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

By Adah Maurer

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT:

is unnecessary.

preempts better means of communicating with a child.

teaches by example that the infliction of pain on others is permissible.

increases aggressiveness in the child.

develops deviousness; the trick is to not get caught.

is dangerous in that it escalates into battering.

reduces the ability to concentrate on intellectual tasks.

can cause sexual aberrations.

damages the punisher in that it narrows his options, tunnels his vision and tarnishes his image as a scholar.

is inconsistent with any view of the child as a person worthy of respect.

(Adapted from statement of purposes of the committee to END VIOLENCE AGAINST THE NEXT GENERATION, Inc. published in *THE LAST RESORT*, 977 Keeler Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708)

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS UNNECESSARY

On a CBS television program, "October Magazine," an elementary school principal in Houston, Texas, was asked by the interviewer: "What would happen if corporal punishment was abolished by law?" The principal hesitated only slightly before responding with a positive and grim "All learning would cease!"

Teachers in Ottawa, Canada lived through an abolition by law and found they like the resulting calm. In 1974, an opinion poll showed that 85 percent of the principals and well over half the teachers favored the retention of the strap. By 1979, after five years of straplessness, not one educator could be found who believed that it had a place in education. It even became common for parents to come to the schools to ask for advice about how to raise their children without physical punishment (Peacy, 1979).

Polls have consistently shown that teachers tend to say they prefer whatever is the current custom. If paddling is common, it is accepted as inevitable and necessary. Where it has been out of use over any length of time, it is considered unnecessary and unwise. The fact is that all forms of corporal punishment have been forbidden in four states: Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, in most large cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, Omaha, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Washington, and in many middle-sized cities such as: Albuquerque, NM, Battle Creek, MI, Fremont, NE, Pittsburg, KA, Portland, OR, Salt Lake City, UT, San Jose, CA, Silver Spring, MD, and Urbana, IL.

And all learning has not ceased. There has been no mass exodus of disgruntled teachers or principals. Like good soldiers, most have set about finding suitable alternatives and have been pleasantly surprised to find that dedicated concern and good teaching have a better chance of being effective when the threat of violence and antagonism between teachers and students has been removed. Some schools have reported that nothing changed. They had expected an explosion of anarchy if the "bullies" no longer feared the paddle, but the worst they heard was a single sassy, "You dasn't hit me any more," which quickly subsided when no attention was paid to it. Other schools reported enormous gains in reading and arithmetic scores in the years following abolition. A few exceptions should be noted. When the curriculum is not relevant, when attendance is not taken, and when verbal sarcasm prevails, there is likely to be difficulty with or without paddling. Paddling does not improve such a situation but merely adds to the chaotic disorder.

The most widely publicized return to the paddle was a media fiction. Paddling was eliminated in the city of Los Angeles after a California law made it mandatory that in those school districts that chose to use corporal punishment, every parent should be polled each September and asked to indicate in writing whether or not they approved of physical punishment for their own child. Fearing a logistic nightmare, and having listened to an array of psychologists, educators, child protection workers, representatives of minority groups and parents, the Los Angeles Board of Education voted to abolish paddling. They failed, however, to supply sufficient in-service training to administrators or to solve the problem of busing or the transfer or retraining of those teachers who felt they could not handle minority children. If there had been a will, a way would have been found to solve these situations but, because Los Angeles is the center of the entertainment industry and awash in personality promotion professionals, a special aura of hyperdrama prevailed. The city that produces "Welcome Back Kotter," "Starsky and Hutch," and "The Dukes of Hazard" could hardly be expected to refrain from dramatizing an explosive controversy on its own door step. A psychiatrist or two saw an opportunity to specialize in "burn out" and spread the confessions of terror and despair they heard from distraught teachers as headline news. No one mentioned that from two to five percent of any professional group (including teachers and psychiatrists) experience emotional distress in any year and in

every part of the country. That handful of teachers who couldn't handle the changing complexion of the student body received an exaggerated billing as if they were typical of all teachers and that the cause was the loss of the "tool" that represented symbolic power. The teacher's organizations negotiated a contract that called for the return of the paddle "with guidelines." A committee was formed to prepare the guidelines but they have yet, in the Spring of 1981, to be adopted. In spite of blatant world-wide publicity, there is no paddling in the Los Angeles schools. Even if reinstituted, the rules will be so stringent as to make the ritual of administering corporal punishment a major production. Not only must parental permission be on file as of the previous September, but the parents must also be called again before any application of the paddle. There can be no more than three strokes of the paddle at any one time and no more than three paddling episodes per year. Each child's health record must be checked just prior to the punishment and any difficulty such as enuresis, hemophilia, neurasthenia, constipation, uneven testis, backache, scoliosis, bone cancer, etc. would rule out paddling. Furthermore, the child himself may refuse. If he does not bend over willingly on request, he may not be forced or held down but must be given an alternative penalty.

All learning has not ceased. Corporal punishment is unnecessary. A great many other things are necessary: an appropriate curriculum that serves the needs of the children; a dedicated and enthusiastic faculty who thoroughly enjoy watching young minds and hearts develop, expand and become refined; and an administration that genuinely cares about the future of American society more than they do about their own career advancement. With that as a basis and with freedom to innovate, access to good libraries and other learning experiences, an understanding of conflict resolution principles and an end to the threat of nuclear annihilation, paddles, straps and karate chops would soon fade as historical curiosities.

Corporal punishment preempts better means of communicating with a child.

Even if we lack a utopian set of schools with ideal teachers and administrators, paddles are better abolished so that the approach to perfection may be speeded a bit. The primary hindrance that paddles pose to the improvement of learning is the same hindrance that economists ascribe to "bad money." It is a truism among those who understand economics that bad money drives out good. Physicians know that the promise of a quick cure, even though it fails time after time is still preferred by impatient people to the long, slow but sure, improvement that can be achieved by clean living, good habits, good nutrition and following the well known, but oft ignored, good health maintenance rules. Paddles, similarly, give the false promise of a quick cure and thus preempt better means of communicating with the child.

If paddling is permitted, the temptation to reach for the paddle to correct more and more faults and more minor faults is almost irrestible. The claim that it is used only as a last resort is a response to criticism or complaints. If the

students and their parents are convinced or cowed into believing that "teacher knows best" the last resort tends to become the first and only resort. It will be used to keep children from climbing poles to high tension wires, from bullying younger children, and from stealing other's lunch money. It will also be used as a response to gum chewing, tardiness, and spelling mistakes. A first grade teacher in Ohio was enamored of her reputation as a strict disciplinarian, but the year she was assigned a fast track group of high achievers there were no destructive or inattentive pupils among them. The customary level of swatting (and hence her dearly held leadership) could only be maintained by escalating the punishable faults. Thus six year olds working in third grade workbooks were "stroked" (her word) for mistakes. Not until an indignant father, who was also a psychologist, requested the school board to justify a thrashing paddle because his daughter had underlined key words rather than circling them as the directions called for, did anyone inquire as to the value of punitive corrections. The school board ruled that corporal punishment would no longer be used for academic errors. Without that interference, the paddle (bad money) was driving out instruction (good money).

Corporal punishment teaches by example that the infliction of pain on others is permissible.

Paddling teaches by example a number of lessons better not learned. The "Parrot in the Henhouse" is a favorite fable of Stanford's Albert Bandura, the leading advocate of modelling and social learning. It seems that a parrot fancier acquired a new bird who proved to be a slow learner. He tried in vain to teach the bird to say "Uncle," and even resorted to a stick to get the bird's attention. "Say 'Uncle!'" he shouted with each whack of the stick. But the stubborn bird said nothing. Finally in disgust he gave up and tossed the stupid bird out into the hen house and forgot about it. Sometime later he heard a dreadful squawking in the henhouse and went out to see what was the matter. The otherwise placid hens were in a feathery fury. There was the parrot, a stick clutched firmly by one wing, hitting at the heads of the hens and squaking, "Say 'Uncle'."

The example of the teacher who with authority of the law and social custom behind him, controls those smaller and weaker than himself by physical means is not one easily erased from the memory and hence the repertoire of each succeeding generation. Moreover, it acts as a justification for familial child abuse.

> The State and its agents must set the highest possible standards for the care of children in its charge because of the state's symbolic importance in molding the behavior of private citizens toward children . . . The United States is unlikely to adopt the Swedish position banning parents from using corporal punishment on their children, but legislation affecting schools will doubtless communicate changing attitudes to parents, since the acceptance of corporal punishment in public settings encourages physical punishment by parents (Zigler, 1980, p. 296).

Much the same sentiment was expressed earlier in testimony at a hearing in the U.S. Senate on the Child Abuse Prevention Act (Gil, 1973). Surveys, inadequate and incomplete though they may be, point strongly to the fact that child abuse statistics are high in the same areas of the country where corporal punishment in the schools is most used. The schools should lead in pioneering better methods of maintaining discipline rather than descending to the level of the least able in the community.

Corporal punishment increases aggressiveness in the child.

The increased aggressiveness in the child — his propensity to pass the punishment on to younger siblings, pets and other vulnerables — has additional causation beyond the simple imitation of his elders. It is probably rooted deeply in the nature of our mammalian heritage. Laboratory animals punished by electric shock universally exhibit avoidance behavior; the first reaction to pain is an attempt to escape. But if the cage prevents, the animal will attack anything handy: a cagemate, an inanimate object or even the bars of the cage (Azrin & Holz, 1966). Such behavior has survival value. Escape to live another day, but if cornered, turn and fight to the death is the well observed law of the jungle. Remnants of this behavior are also conspicuous in children who have yet to learn the civilized survival behaviors. Even the youngest will wriggle away or run and try to hide; all will use whatever ability they have to protect themselves, but if subdued and punished in spite of their best efforts, most remain in a state of high arousal that subsides only very slowly, and may not reach baseline before another punishment episode sends it soaring again. Much more study needs to be done on the physiological concomitants of fear and anger as aroused by hurtful punishment. Stress is known to cause distortion of the endocrine system (Selye, 1956) and, although the specific effects of a thrashing have not been thoroughly documented, painful punishment must be classed as stress.

The Manhattan project, a ten year follow up study, showed quite clearly that the amount of destructive aggressiveness shown by fifteen year olds correlated very highly with the amount and severity of the physical punishment they had received as five year olds (Trotter, 1976). Delinquents generally have been subjected to more than the average amount of painful punishment (Welsh, 1976; Button, 1973; Maurer. 1972-81). All of the notorious mass murderers of the past decade have sprung from the class of battered children.

These findings are contrary to folklore. Even researchers were surprised:

> . . . we anticipated that punishment for aggressive behavior would lead to inhibition of aggression in situations similar to the one in which punishment was originally administered. Findings of field studies contradicted these predictions derived from laboratory research in that *increased* (italics added) aggression was routinely found to be associated with increased punishment for this behavior (Eron, Walder & Lefkowitz, 1971, p. 81).

Less sophisticated beliefs are usually couched as true stories, often told of well known personalities or as biographical bits to illustrate a point. The plot is stereotypical. The culprit, fundamentally good but on this occasion in high spirits, perpetrates a misdemeanor intended to be funny but definitely challenges authority. The very patient schoolmaster promptly (a must word) takes down the rawhide and proceeds to thrash the bully while he "writhes under the lash" until he begs for mercy and promises to reform and never do such a thing again. Whereupon the chastened youth blubbers his gratitude to the master. All parties become fast friends for life. An addenda usually describes how the reformed one came to call a decade later to express his eternal gratitude for having been saved from a life of sin and despair by the timely intervention of the new revered authority. This is a fairy tale. It is not in the same class with *Cinderella* and *Hansel and Gretel* where the abused children triumph through their own cleverness or the intervention of a good spirit and in which the evil punishers get their comeuppance. Hans Christian Anderson must have been a subversive of sorts; he never let the ogre triumph.

Corporal punishment develops deviousness; the trick is to not get caught.

There is a step between attempted escape and ill-suppressed rage that is open to middle school boys. They can lie ("I didn't do it. Honest!"); they can blame others ("He started it!"); or they can develop some idiosyncratic form of fending off retribution. They can watch out next time to make sure the master is elsewhere, they can set up some patsy to carry out their mischief and take the blame; they can outwit better than they can outrun if they are brazen enough.

Punishment and the threat of punishment develop deviousness. Lying and scheming are only the most obvious forms. There is another that is less easily recognized. It goes by many names: apple polishing, appeasing, toadying, buttering-up, insincere flattery, and obsequiousness.

We usually do not give children credit for an ability to dissemble with any degree of success. Further, it is likely that such ability could not be measured scientifically or discovered in a personality profile. But a clinician, one who becomes familiar with battered and overpunished children while studying their coping devices, may observe it in action. A mother and her five year old daughter in a therapy session were intent, the child on her coloring, the mother on trying to explain her angry episodes. The child glanced up at her mother's face every few minutes then returned to coloring. During one such glance she saw her mother looking extremely angry and raising her right arm. With startling rapidity she leaped onto her mother's lap hugging her tightly and nuzzling her breasts. The mother was neither surprised nor annoyed. Her raised arm came down around the child; she lost her train of thought and half smirked in explanation, "She does that. Sometimes when I'm upset she does that." An abused child had discovered a way to defuse the punisher's fury.

A similar mechanism is probably the basis for the multitude of tales about

the grateful child who returned to thank his punisher. One also suspects that it is easier to be thus "grateful" when one has grown in power enough to despise.

Corporal punishment is dangerous in that it escalates into battering.

The Houston principal who appeared on television to defend her policy of paddling, had on her desk (and showed to the camera) a paddle about half the size of a ping-pong paddle and about 1/4 inch thick. She didn't say that it was the paddle she used, but she implied it as she patted it gently against her palm to demonstrate how innocuous a paddling really was. Paddles in actual use are five times that size, heavy, drilled with holes to raise blisters, and quite capable of damaging kidneys, breaking off the coccyx bone, paralyzing the sciatic nerve and causing severe damage. Indeed all these things have happened. Further, school punishments have resulted in broken collar bones, knocked out teeth, and concussions. The incident that went to the Supreme Court in 1977, and resulted in the decision that corporal punishment, no matter how severe, was not prohibited by the Eighth Amendment, was incredibly cruel.

> According to students, assistant principal Lemmis Deliford displayed brass knuckles as he patrolled the corridors. Solomon Barnes, another assistant to the principal, was said to sport both brass knuckles and a large wooden paddle at the school. One day, because fourteen year old James Ingraham was slow to leave the auditorium stage, he was held face down on a table by Deliford and Barnes while the principal, Willie J. Wright, hit him on the buttocks at least twenty times with the paddle. Later that day Ingraham's mother took him to a hospital . . . (where) a doctor prescribed ice packs, pain pills, sleeping pills and a laxative and advised Ingraham to rest at home for at least a week. More than a week after the beating, another doctor examined him and found that the hematoma was still 'swollen, tender and purplish in color' and was discharging fluid . . . (Flygare, 1978, p. 29).

Cases have been documented in which children were roped together, tied to the teacher's motorcycle and dragged about the parking lot. Two boys were required to eat 18 cigarettes which made them violently ill and left ulcers. A young woman of 17 who parked her car on the grass was required to bend over and accept blows on the buttocks in the presence of three grinning coaches. A second grade boy had his face slammed down onto a desk so hard that his nose was broken. More than one pre-schooler has been beaten to death for being unable to attend to the ABC's. In one case the police found the child's preacher/teacher continuing to beat the dead body (Maurer, 1972-81).

Wherever corporal punishment is allowed, a certain percentage escalates into violence. Most local judges interpret the common law literally; only deadly force is forbidden. The Supreme Court of the State of Connecticut is an exception. In a case where a child being disciplined was thrown in such a way as to break his collar bone, the Court ruled that teachers who opt to use corporal punishment are responsible for any damage that results. "The power to punish

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does not include punishment which is disproportionate to the offense, unnecessarily degrading or likely to cause serious or permanent harm," the opinion stated. Indiana has no law concerning corporal punishment and thus holds judges to the common law inherited from England. A paddling principal in that state carried a "Mr. Ford" and a "Dr. Pepper" and used them so constantly and indiscriminately that the community rose up demanding her removal. She was subsequently adjudged not guilty of a particularly vicious beating because the little girl she paddled was not permanently crippled and did not die. The Indiana ruling is far more common than the Connecticut decision.

Corporal punishment reduces the ability to concentrate on intellectual tasks.

The extreme cases cited above are naturally in the minority, although common enough to constitute a national disgrace. They include perhaps one percent of the instances of spanking but they are not the only ones that cause trouble. Those who receive less than lethal doses of upending and painful embarrassment are also damaged. When the air is blue with threats and discipline is an ever present priority it is unlikely that there will be much intellectual curiosity or creative achievement. It may have been possible to drive slaves into the fields with whips, but it is not possible to whip astronauts into orbit. For new inventions to be born, great literature to be written, symphonies to be played, businesses to be organized, budgets to be balanced, babies to be nurtured, bridges to be built, or any useful activity accomplished in today's world, there must be a large component of peaceful security, of space largely free of the threat of condemnatory physical pain. Concentration on intellectual tasks requires an atmosphere of comparative tranquillity. In an emergency, it is true that our senses are sharpened and our strength doubled, but only for the purpose of escaping the burning building, outmaneuvering the semi-trailer bearing down upon us or outwitting the prowler creeping toward us. At moments like those — and even less dramatic exigencies — we are keyed as our primitive forebearers were for flight or fight. The breath comes fast, the heart races, and senses are alert. But can we, at such moments, add a column of figures? Or make sense of the fine print in an insurance policy? Or croon a love song?

Protected leisure originated with the need of the primitive to preserve his bodily wholeness. It made possible the first glimmerings of purely cerebral activities. Children too must have protected leisure in order to learn to read, to write and to know numbers. Leisure in this sense means merely a relaxation from the self protective alertness. Children in punitive homes rarely have such space and time. They often appear socially precocious and street-wise, adept at finding their way through the maze of potential disasters but, when confined to a desk and a workbook, become restless. They are labelled as having a "short attention span."

One such little one in first grade could not sit still. She looked about

constantly, cocking her head this way and that much like a tiny bird. She attended to every movement of the teacher and every sound in the room. The grind of the pencil sharpener brought her to a full staring stand. But only meaningless scratches could be found in her reading readiness workbook. Suspected dyslexia could not be proved; her hand-eye coordination was excellent. Her speech was good and her intelligence as measured by an individual test was within normal limits. It turned out that she had seven older brothers who loved her dearly and teased her unmercifully. She was tripped, poked, pinched, surprised with "boo's" from behind, laughed at, and had chairs, food, and candy snatched from her. One favorite game was tossing her from one brother to another pretending they were going to let her fall. She had no bruises on her and no one realized that such an uncertain environment made concentration impossible. She had to stay alert every instant lest a pinch or poke, a boo or a bump, or one of the monsters they warned her about knock her off balance.

School spankings for inattention to lessons might have sent this child over the edge into total mental disorder. Fortunately her small size and matchstick limbs — which added to the bird image — meant a return to kindergarten rather than physical punishment. Her father apologized to the perceptive kindergarten teacher, "They don't mean no harm," but at home he was firm. "Knock it off, you guys. She's my honey now."

Many individual cases testify to a rise in scholastic achievement when security replaced punishment. Some schools record remarkable increases in test scores when inspiration replaces confrontation, accusation, and penalty. Research on a larger scale should be attempted if such is needed to help convince the confirmed believers that punishment is not the answer to every problem.

Corporal punishment can cause sexual aberrations.

The question of spanking as an aphrodisiac is too complex for discussion here. The Marquis de Sade, Francois Masoch, Sigmund Freud, and Havelock Ellis, not to mention a multitude of lesser writers all have testified to the danger of prematurely stirring up the sexual feelings of the prepubertal child by excessive stimulation of the anal erotic area. The most recent book is *The English Vice: Beating, Sex and Shame in Victorian England and After* by Ian Gibson (1978).

Corporal punishment damages the punisher in that it narrows his options, tunnels his vision and tarnishes his image as a scholar.

Corporal punishment is inconsistent with any view of the child as a person worthy of respect.

It damages the punisher in that it narrows his options, tunnels his vision and tarnishes his image as a man of learning.

Lastly, the time is long overdue when children must be admitted to first class citizenship. The beating of soldiers and sailors has been abolished. The beating of wives is no longer family discipline; it is a crime. Prisoners, criminals of all kinds, no matter how depraved are protected against the final insult to their bodies: a flogging. Even juvenile delinquents convicted of committing crimes of rape, murder, theft, and drug peddling are not whipped. Of all the Americans in our "land of the free," the only ones who can be legally thrashed up to deadly force, are non-criminal school children.

This is inconsistent with any view of the child as a person worthy of respect.

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THE HICK'RY STICK: IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THE TUNE*

by John R. Cryan and Jamie Smith

The U.S. Constitution protects every adult — even convicted criminals — from physical violence or cruel and unusual punishment. Furthermore, in virtually every state, it is against the law to physically abuse any animal or child. And yet, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that it is permissible for school personnel to inflict "reasonable" corporal punishment on children as young as four years of age for any alleged misconduct.

Since forty-six out of the fifty states have chosen to go along with the Supreme Court's view of corporal punishment in the schools (Flygare, 1978), and since violence as well as human rights are of prime concern to our society today, let us examine this situation more closely.

What, for example, is "reasonable" punishment? In the recent landmark case of *Ingraham* v. *Wright*, the plaintiff, a junior high school student, was beaten more than twenty times with a two-foot-long wooden paddle. He suffered a bruise that kept him out of school for eleven days. But the Supreme Court dismissed the "cruel and unusual punishment" argument because, it maintained, the Eighth Amendment was intended to protect criminals, not school children (Curtz, 1977).

In addition, adults have the right to a hearing or trial when they are accused of minor infractions of the law, including a one-dollar parking fine. And even a mass murderer can appeal his death sentence to a higher authority. School children, on the other hand, are not protected by personal rights, legal rights, or even by their parents' wishes when they are in school.

This means they can be struck for any undefined offense by a person who assumes the triple role of accuser, judge, and executioner of punishment (Farson, 1974). They are not required to receive notice or a hearing prior to the administration of punishment. They cannot appeal to a higher authority, and even their parents' objections may be ignored by the school.

How did we arrive at this ludicrous state of affairs? More importantly, how can we change it?

Unfortunately, custom and tradition are heavily on the side of corporal punishment. It even has extensive Biblical support, especially in Proverbs: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. . . . Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou

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beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs, 22:13, 23:13, 14). Deuteronomy has an even more stringent cure for chronic misbehavior: stoning by the town's elders (Deuteronomy, 21:18-21).

The admonition, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," is as familiar and as accepted as the notion of having "'rithmetic, taught to the tune of the hickory stick." For years, teachers and school administrators have assumed — with the tacit approval of the community — that paddling is the fast, efficient way to get and maintain discipline (Queer, 1971). They have argued that it's a quick and easy method which parents endorse, students expect, and everyone understands. Besides, they argue, it works.

Arguments in favor of corporal punishment are often founded in what appear to be incontrovertible truths. Some have called paddling a "tried and true" method (Clarizio, 1975, p. 1), while others have claimed that students want corporal punishment (NEA *Report of the Tast Force on Corporal Punishment, 1972).* In fact, the NEA *Report* lists no less than twenty-two reasons and conditions for corporal punishment which have been advanced by schools across the country.

An educator at Michigan State University claims corporal punishment is a necessary "last resort when all else has failed" (Ebel, 1975, p. 3). He goes so far as to assert that lack of such punishment may indicate a teacher is spending so much time avoiding disciplinary situations that he or she is not able to devote enough time to teaching!

Besides, educators can console themselves with the thought that corporal punishment is legal in every state except Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts and New Jersey. The legislation in some states explains that the school is acting *in loco parentis.* Other states just sanction paddling without bothering to justify it (James, 1963). According to Boonin (1979), of the forty states that actually authorize corporal punishment by law, thirty-seven of them don't even define it.

Perhaps, too, school personnel are — like the rest of us — somewhat inured to violence. Given the climate of vandalism and crime in schools across the nation and in every other facet of life around the world, teachers may find it easier to choose corporal punishment as a *modus operandi* when things tend to get out of hand.

In any case, even if the weight of state legislation and public opinion, past and present, were not enough incentive, schools also have what amounts to a green light from the U.S. Supreme Court to administer corporal punishment. In *Baker* v. *Owen,* for example, three arguments were put forth: that the punishment meted out to the child was cruel and unusual; that the child had been denied due process of the law; and that, in general, parents have the right to determine the nature and extent of a child's discipline (Flygare, 1976).

The Supreme Court, however, gave active consideration to the last argument only. It concluded that schools could use "reasonable" physical punishment on a child if the child were forewarned, less drastic measures were tried first, a second staff member was present to witness, and the spanking was reported to parents who wished to be informed (Oelsner, 1975).

This decision became the law of the land in October, 1975. It made perfectly clear that corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes is legal in the Court's eyes, and that a school authority can countermand parental objections because the "state has a countervailing interest in the maintenance of law and order in the schools" (Oelsner, 1975, p. 1).

More recently, in *Ingraham* v. *Wright*, Justice Powell stated the majority view this way: "We are reviewing here a legislative judgment rooted in history and reaffirmed in the laws of many states, that corporal punishment serves important educational interests" (Curtz, 1977, p. 13). The Court refused to consider the argument that the spanking (or beating, in this case) was "so arbitrary, capricious, and unrelated to any legitimate educational objective that it was in violation of the concept of substantive due process" (Flygare, 1976, p. 347). In a close (5-4) decision, the Court also rejected the due process and "cruel and unusual punishment" arguments.

It can be, and often is, argued that the Court does not endorse an action simply because it fails to find it unconstitutional. But it can also be argued that it does, in fact, endorse corporal punishment when its decisions fly in the face of so much evidence by educators, psychologists, and sociologists that corporal punishment is harmful, ineffective, and contrary to everything our schools and our nation stand for. Let us look more closely at some of the evidence.

According to modern behavioral psychologists, physical or social punishment is defined as negative reinforcement. As such, it has been found to be relatively ineffective in permanently changing pupil behavior because it must be continually repeated (Kujoth, 1970). Furthermore, an English study found corporal punishment to be worse than ineffective; the study revealed that it was contributing directly to misbehavior and juvenile delinquency outside of school (Kujoth, 1970).

Educators since the fifteenth century have pointed out that the administration of corporal punishment creates a dehumanizing, inappropriate school environment which increases disruptive behavior and hinders learning. This was a conclusion of the Task Force on Corporal Punishment in 1972, and also of John Amos Comenius in 1632, when he stated: "This education shall be conducted without blows, rigour, or compulsion. . . . (because) nutriment, care, and exercise prudently supplied to the mind, lead it naturally to wisdom, virtue, and piety" (Comenius, 1923, p. 81). Corporal punishment was banned in Poland in 1783, in the Netherlands in 1850, in France in 1887, in Finland in 1890, and in Sweden in 1958. The Soviet Union and most of the Communist Bloc countries also prohibit it (Boonin, 1979).

Both Comenius and his twentieth-century colleague, Farson, agree that a teacher who serves as a punishing model teaches the pupil how to threaten others with violence — a lesson which doubtless is not in the lesson plan. Farson argues that this kind of example fails to provide students with an active model of the democratic process, and denies them the very rights their history teachers claim the U.S. Constitution provides (Farson, 1974). Members of the Task Force on Corporal Punishment add that paddling of students teaches them that might makes right, and that physical force is an appropriate, acceptable way of influencing other people.

Members of the Task Force also point out a critical fallacy in the rationale of *in loco parentis* — i.e., that corporal punishment by school authorities cannot be equated with similar punishment by parents because the student's relationship to the school is entirely different from his relationship to his parents. The school-child relationship is intermittent, with different adults involved at different times of the day and year, very often at superficial levels and for short periods of time. The parent-child relationship, on the other hand, is a lifelong, continuous relationship which ordinarily incorporates within it deep feelings of mutual love and affection. For this reason, corporal punishment inflicted by parents might have an entirely different effect than the same punishment meted out by a school.

Another fallacy has been cited in the concept of *in loco parentis* as a rationale for corporal punishment in the schools. When this concept originated, education was voluntary and personal. The parent voluntarily committed his child to the authority of the teacher, who usually spent the entire day with the child in a small class or school, thereby developing something close to a parent-child relationship with him. Today, however, the situation is drastically changed. Education is no longer voluntary, and parents have little if any choice of teachers or even of schools. Most teachers instruct children for only part of the day, and have fewer opportunities to form close relationships in large classes and schools.

The argument for parents' rights, although somewhat on the fringes of the corporal punishment controversy, is also worth noting. Initially, the courts held that corporal punishment could be inflicted without parental authority; then a decision followed that parental permission was required, after all, before corporal punishment could be administered (Gunn, 1974). In *Baker* v. *Owen*, however, the Supreme Court reverted to the earlier ruling, claiming that parents did not have the right to interfere with school procedures, including corporal punishment. This being the case, a person who voices conscientious objections to fighting in time of war receives more respect for his rights today than does a person who voices conscientious objections to the corporal punishment of his children.

A final argument advanced by those who are opposed to corporal punishment is the need for respect of the child's funadmental, constitutional personal rights, including the right of due process. As Gunn says, ". . . since it

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has been determined that children are possessed of the fundamental rights of the Constitution, childhood alone is no longer an adequate basis for denying rights to which an individual would otherwise be entitled" (Gunn, 1974, p. 682).

With all these arguments for the rights of children and parents and against the use of corporal punishment, what can we conclude from the Supreme Court's actions? That the court is interested only in the constitutionality of questions brought to it? That the Court wants to leave the matter of education to the states?

Both contentions could, perhaps, be argued successfully. However, it could also be argued that today's Supreme Court is more than a constitutional arbiter. It has become a shaper of moral values and a catalyst for social change, especially in the areas of civil rights and education.

It is true, however, that states have primary responsibility for educational policies, and that our efforts to eliminate corporal punishment in the schools might best be directed first at state policy makers. We might, for example, begin by convincing them that the school cannot be, and often is not, *in loco parentis*, so that this justification for paddling could be eliminated. Next, we might try to convince state policy makers that neither parents' nor children's rights should be suspended in our schools, by getting them to see the folly of our educators teaching democracy to students while practicing dictatorial methods of government in the classroom. And finally, it should not be unreasonable to hope that state policy makers could be swayed by the mounting evidence that violence in the classroom not only breeds more violence in and out of school, but also is useless as a deterrent to misbehavior.

As an afterthought, it is hard to avoid this bit of intellectual mischief: how much easier the task of persuasion would be if we were allowed to approach these state policy makers with a five-foot wooden paddle in hand!

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THE PEDIATRICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT*

by Morris A. Wessel

Concerns about child abuse cause many pediatricians to question the widespread use of corporal punishment as a method of disciplining children.

The "spare the rod and spoil the child" philosophy is deeply ingrained in American child rearing (Gerbner, Ross and Zigler, 1980; Zigler, 1980; Owens and Straus, 1979). This allows — indeed encourages — many parents and other adults caring for children to spank or hit with the hand, belt, or paddle, or to force a child to stand for a long period of time or to institute other immoderate measures when disciplining seems to be necessary. The acceptance of corporal punishment as a way of dealing with children poses an important question: Why is this true in America while in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Holland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, Maritius, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Russia and Sri Lanka, legislation prohibits the use of corporal punishment by educational personnel? And in Sweden, this prohibition now includes parents (Taylor and Newberger, 1979)!

As pediatricians, we are aware that the adults — parents, educators and health care workers — who inflict corporal punishment on a child as either the "first" or "last" resort are at their wit's end; they are frustrated with the child's specific behavior of the moment. They lose control of their feelings and in moment of anger inflict pain upon a child.

When we consider the child's developmental stage or life experiences, we realize that a child's exasperating behavior is often understandable. The toddler whose intense curiosity and newly acquired motor skills motivate him to yank the tablecloth and to cause dishes to crash to the floor rarely understands that spanking means "don't do it again." The preschooler who awakens at night disturbing his parents' sleep may be experiencing frightening nightmares. The child who, having achieved bowel and bladder control, regresses to previously abandoned patterns of soiling is usually reacting to the absence of his mother, birth of a sibling, a move, or other environmental stress. The school age child who fails to sit still or who breaks rules while standing in line or playing in the school yard, or who cannot remember yesterday's lesson, or who retreats from a specific educational task may be suffering from hunger, exhaustion, or illness; he may be experiencing visual, auditory, or perceptual deficits; his behavior may be attributed to a learning disability, or may be a reflection of a family breakdown and intense turmoil at home. The behavior which causes the adult's loss of self-restraint is likely to be beyond the child's control. The problem lies in the adult's

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unrealistic expectation of what a specific infant, preschool, or school age child is able to understand and do at this particular moment (Wessel, 1980).

Spanking and inflicting other forms of corporal punishment in response to exasperating behavior confuse a child who cannot comprehend why adults are treating him in this manner. All he knows is that adults whom he loves and trusts are attacking him, sometimes in an angry and violent manner. The immediate effect on the child ranges from mild embarrassment and feeling of worthlessness to permanent physical and psychological harm. There is also evidence which indicates that although corporal punishment may momentarily alter behavior, it is ineffective as a permanent solution to a child's difficulty in establishing the appropriate self-control necessary to please the adults who care for him (Bongiovanni, 1979).

There are, of course, occasions when a toddler runs toward the street, or when older children fight one another, or when a dangerous object is at hand. Necessary restraining efforts by responsible adults at such moments are vastly different than the repeated use of corporal punishment by adults as a way of dealing with exasperation and frustration when a child fails to meet their demands and expectations.

When an adult hits a child, there is the ever-present possibility — and frequent reality — that what is intended to be a "normal" slapping or spanking becomes injurious and life-threatening. Numerous authors document that adult disciplinary methods intended to be minor all too often become serious and potentially fatal to children. Severe abrasions, hemotomas, broken bones, fractured skulls, brain hemorrhage, spinal and whiplash damage, internal bleeding, cigarette burns, and sciatic nerve damage are increasingly being reported throughout this country.

The philosophic bases for inflicting corporal punishment — for example, "beating the devil out of the child," or "I'll show him who's boss" — assumed by many adults to represent the best interests of the child, are untenable. Corporal punishment to a child can only represent the inflicting of painful, and at times dangerous, injuries by an adult whom the child loves and trusts as his caretaker. The fact that so many parents slap or spank their children is a national disgrace. Millions of children annually face adults — primarily parents and teachers — who use violent forms of discipline (Caffey, 1946; Kempe and Kempe, 1978; Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Maurer, 1979).

Any physical violence inflicted upon a child by a parent or teacher establishes a model of behavior for the future. The child learns that it is acceptable to vent anger and frustration by hitting or some other form of aggression. Physical violence conveys to the child the idea that the adults who nurture and provide for him and who love, or should love, him are also the adults who can hit him — and get away with it. Love and nurturing become associated with anger and violence so that the pattern of uncontrolled aggression becomes hopelessly entangled in the child's character as he learns

how adults relate to one another. Physical punishment establishes for the child the moral rightness of violence, particularly within a family, and leads to approval in adulthood of violent methods as a means of achieving socially desirable goals, securing desired political ends, and maintaining social control in situations which involve husband and wife, parent and child, and teacher and student (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).

The vast majority of child, wife or husband beaters have grown up in families where corporal punishment was utilized as a disciplinary method. Beaten and battered children are more likely to become adults who have inadequate control of their aggressive feelings, who therefore strike out mercilessly against their children, spouses, friends, and at times even other members of society. The violence inflicted upon children by their closest relatives and caretakers has a long-lasting and horrifying effect. These children grow up with the idea that, when another person's behavior is displeasing to them, violent acts against that person are appropriate ways to deal with the feelings of displeasure. In short, members of each adult generation tend to reproduce in their interpersonal relationships the violence which they experienced in their childhood. This cycle of violence inevitably repeats itself from generation to generation.

The use of corporal punishment by educators is inconsistent with their educational goals. Even with parental permission, educators have no rational excuse for utilizing this means of discipline. Its continued use against school children is an affront to democratic values. It is demeaning, degrading, and dehumanizing — and it rarely results in improving a child's behavior. Yet, since the educators' methods of relating to children are conceived by most parents as appropriate and correct, educators are placed in the unfortunate position of condoning physical aggression against children by their parents — the very antithesis of what education is all about.

Educators should demonstrate that there are other, more effective and more constructive ways of dealing with a child who is having difficulty adapting to the demands of the school environment. When a respected adult such as a teacher or principal demonstrates that violence is an acceptable way of relating to other human beings, he impairs a child's trust and confidence in the very individual the child is looking to for love, help, and guidance. No matter how slight the blow to the body may be, when inflicted by a teacher or principal it portrays to the child that might makes right — that size, brawn, and position in the adult world entitle that individual to inflict pain on smaller, younger individuals. The child, suppressing his anger and resentment, thinks: "Just wait until I get bigger and in power. . . . I'll beat up people smaller than me, and other people, too, when they make me angry."

A report issued by the National Education Association's Task Force on Corporal Punishment (1972) suggests that teachers tend to resort to corporal punishment as a disciplinary means when class size and other demands allow them little time and opportunity to evaluate the reason for a student's

exasperating behavior or to provide alternative experiences for the restless student. Hunger, severe illness, recent moves, sickness or death in the family, poverty, poor living conditions, and social turmoil reduce a child's ability to meet the demands encountered in school. The overburdened teacher loses control and resorts to corporal punishment. Until the burdens are lessened, particularly for teachers in urban areas, so that classes are smaller in size, and better consultation services and alternative plans are provided for difficult children, teacher frustrations will continue to lead to irrational outcomes such as the use of corporal punishment against students (NEA, 1972).

The widespread acceptance of physical violence as a normal part of American culture poses a difficult challenge to those individuals who consider it immoral and seek to remove the approach from our armamentarium of techniques for nurturing children. The paradox is obvious: An adult, in a fit of anger, slaps a child or inflicts another kind of corporal punishment in an attempt to "help" the child learn to discontinue his displeasing, possibly aggressive behavior. In doing so, the adult demonstrates the exact behavior — physical aggression associated with anger and frustration — that he is attempting to teach the child to discontinue! This can only confuse the child, who looks to the adult as a source of emotional security, protection, and role modeling (Feshbach, 1980).

Despite the widespread concern in this country with battering, abusive parents — concern which has led to the passage of legal statutes in all states aimed at preventing this phenomenon — corporal punishment in schools is still legalized in most states. In fact, only Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts and New Jersey have outlawed corporal punishment in their school systems. Parents are prosecuted under child-abuse legislation for actions which large numbers of educators legally inflict upon students. In other words, our society condones violence against school children while pretending to be horrified at the idea of child abuse.

Neither a teacher hitting a student in anger, nor a "dispassionate" administrator spanking a student in his office before witnesses a few hours after an event, is an effective way to change a child's behavior. Indeed, the similarity between parental battering of children and corporal punishment in the schools has led Yale Professor Zigler, formerly director of the Children's Bureau, to state that child battering by parents will never be eliminated as long as corporal punishment continues to be a legally and socially sanctioned procedure in American schools (Zigler, 1980).

On April 19, 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a five-to-four decision in the case of *Ingraham v. Wright*, ruling that corporal punishment in schools does not constitute cruel and unusual punishment, and that children so disciplined are therefore not guaranteed the rights of the Eighth Amendment. This ruling places a heavy burden on health-care givers — in fact, on all individuals concerned with the welfare of children — to work harder than ever

toward the elimination of corporal punishment as a disciplinary means used by educators and parents.

The National Education Association's Task Force on Corporal Punishment (1972), the American Psychological Association (1975), the American Public Health Association (1979), and the Society of Adolescent Medicine (1980), have all taken a firm stand against corporal punishment. It remains for other professional organizations and each individual in his own community to work toward eliminating this form of disciplinary action, which places vast numbers of children in serious jeopardy. To avoid this responsibility will create another generation with the same intolerable value system — a generation that regards violence as an appropriate way of venting anger and dissatisfaction, and considers it an effective means of solving problems between one human being and another. The risk of standing by and doing nothing is frightening beyond comprehension.

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CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: SOCIALLY SANCTIONED ASSAULT AND BATTERY

by Gertrude J. Rubin Williams

> If you strike a child, take care you strike it in anger . . . A blow in cold blood neither can be, nor should be forgiven. If you beat children for pleasure, avow your object frankly, and play the game according to the rules, as a fox hunter does . . . No fox hunter is such a cad as to pretend he hunts the fox to teach it not to steal chickens or that he suffers more acutely than the fox at death. Remember that even in child beating there is the sportman's way and the cad's way.
>
> *George Bernard Shaw*

The purpose of this chapter is to sensitize all persons committed to the enhancement of child development to the unfortunate and routine acceptance of corporal punishment of children and to point out its irrationalities. My major focus is on this practice in the schools, but the relevance of corporal punishment at school to child abuse at home will be explored.

Schools in the United States overwhelmingly endorse and our laws support the practice of corporal punishment, a euphemism for socially sanctioned assault and battery of children. Webster's New World Dictionary (1972) defines assault as a violent physical or verbal attack or threat of attack, and defines battery as the unlawful beating or use of force upon a person without his consent. Penal codes of several states exclude the corporal punishment of children from the definition of the crime of assault and battery even though an identical action against adults, inherently more able to defend themselves, would constitute assault and battery. In short, punching an adult is assault and battery; punching a child is discipline. A child who strikes a teacher creates disorder, whereas a teacher who strikes a child creates order in the classroom.

Further examination reveals even more startling absurdities. School personnel are often insured against lawsuits relating to their corporal punishment of children at school. One policy pays $300,000 for each occurrence plus defense costs up to the policy limits. Imagine the public outcry if muggers were offered insurance coverage for lawsuits against them by their victims. Imagine the outrage if employers still had the right to whip adult employees for tardiness, making mistakes in work, or cutting up. Imagine, finally, the ridicule of proponents who insist that paddlings of employees facilitate learning, improved character, and maintenance of order on the job.

At school, children are beaten with paddles, rattans, straps, belts, and fists.

They are slapped, dragged by their hair, shaken, choked, pushed, pulled, punched, and forced to perform injurious and humiliating actions. They live under the threat of violence from more powerful adults if they misbehave. What are the misbehaviors for which children are assaulted at school? Here are a few: not paying attention, chewing gum, failing to say "sir," entering the classroom with shirt-tails out, hitting a classmate, refusal to undress for gym, cutting up, and sailing paper airplanes.

In the 1975 case of *Baker v. Owen*, playing kickball after the school bell has rung was added to the above list by the United States Supreme Court, when it legally sanctioned corporal punishment of a psychologically fragile boy whose mother had specified that he not be struck by teachers. In its retrogressive ruling, the Court let stand a federal court's decision to allow teachers to corporally punish children against objections by their parents. The court contended that "the State's interest in maintaining order must be balanced against the mother's right to control the means of disciplining her child. . . . Outlawing corporal punishment bucks a settled tradition of countenancing such punishment when reasonable" *(Baker v. Owen, 1975)*. When reasonable? There's the rub! If an adult continued playing kickball after the coach had blown the whistle, as had occurred in this case, and the coach had beaten that adult on the buttocks with a one-foot long wooden drawer divider, the coach would certainly have been viewed as unreasonable if not demented. When the same action is taken against an eleven year old boy at school, the action becomes viewed as reasonable.

The Supreme Court's 1977 ruling in the case of *Ingraham v. Wright* added to the litany of irrationally sanctioned violence against children at school. The plaintiff, Ingraham, a junior high school student, was in such pain from being "struck repeatedly with a wooden instrument" by Wright, the principal, that he was taken to the hospital for treatment. The Court record indicated that "plaintiff introduced evidence that he had suffered a painful bruise that required the prescription of cold compresses, a laxative, sleeping and pain-killing pills and ten days of rest at home and that prevented him from sitting comfortably for three weeks." The Court ruled that "the administration of corporal punishment in public schools, whether or not excessively administered, does not come within the scope of Eighth Amendment protection." That is, the U.S. Constitution's "cruel and unusual punishment" clause applies to the protection of incarcerated criminals, not children in public schools (*Ingraham* v. *Wright*, 1977).

Preposterous consequences emerge from this ruling. Children in American public schools now receive less protection against violence than do criminals in prison. Furthermore, children placed in juvenile institutions under court order for the conviction of crimes receive more legal protection than do other children placed in the same institution for intellectual impairment or emotional problems. In 1853, a judge of the Indiana Supreme Court noted that it was illegal for a master to beat his apprentice and an officer to beat an ordinary

sailor; and he wondered "why the person of a schoolboy should be less sacred." In the 1970's, the United States Supreme Court failed to ask why the person of a school child should continue to be less sacred.

What are the mutual impacts of laws relating to the corporal punishment of children at school and laws relating to child abuse at home? The Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act of 1974 legally mandates professionals to immediately report reasonable suspicion of child abuse. A bruise inflicted on a child by a parent is an example of suspected child abuse, whereas a bruise inflicted on a child by a teacher is an example of "the settled tradition of corporal punishment." Chase (1975) asks, "How can you take a parent to court for hitting a child and allow a teacher to hit him? If the courts can remove a child from its parents because of abuse, how can they hand the child over for abuse to our public schools?" Who will report the teacher who practices violence against children at school? Certainly not the parents, because the court has upheld a teacher's violence against children. Another teacher? Chase stated that a teacher kept reporting a pattern of repeated beatings of children in his school in New York, but school authorities did not respond. Finally, the teacher went to the *New York Times* with a wooden paddle as evidence. This action resulted in the teacher's suspension for going outside school channels. Thus, in the midst of the furor about child abuse at home and presumed efforts to curb and prevent it, violence against children continues to be endorsed by the highest court in the nation. And a major social institution, the public school, now serves as a model of legally and socially sanctioned child abuse, especially to marginal and brutal parents.

In his testimony at the Senate hearings on the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Gil (1973) referred to findings that child abuse occurred in all income groups and in ordinary families. He stated that this was not surprising because:

> . . . the use of physical force in the rearing and disciplining of children is widely accepted in our country. Common sense suggests that whenever corporal punishment is widely used, extreme cases are bound to occur and children will be injured . . . Our studies indicate that the widespread acceptance in our culture of physical discipline of children is the underlying factor in physical abuse (Gil, 1973, p. 8).

After evaluating press clippings of cases of corporal punishment in schools across the nation, Hyman (1980) concluded that the community is more supportive of abusive teachers than corporally punished school children and their parents. My own experience as an expert witness in corporal punishment cases attests to this conclusion. A case in point is that of an eleven year old girl who was beaten with a yard stick by her six foot male teacher. She had been pulled from the cloakroom where she tried unsuccessfully to cling to a radiator, was then dragged screaming into the classroom where she was beaten on the buttocks and on the hands as she attempted to ward off further blows. The

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regulations of the St. Louis City Public Schools state that "the proper manner of administering corporal punishment" to an elementary school child is "the application of a thin rattan or some similar instrument upon the fleshy part of the back." Apparently the writers of this regulation sanctioning violence against young children were too genteel to use the term buttocks, as the site of the assault. Incredibly, a basis for bringing the matter to the court at all was the fact that the child's hands, an improper anatomical site, were whipped in addition to the buttocks. This child's crime? Refusing to leave the cloakroom. The mother testified that she had not given the school permission to corporally punish her daughter.

After deliberating for forty-five minutes, the jury decided in favor of the teacher who had testified on the need to maintain order in the classroom. During court recess, I heard someone say, "A kid suing a teacher? What'll they think of next?" And as we filed out of the courtroom: "A teacher shouldn't have to worry about getting sued for doing his job!" and "That'll teach her to get out of line. Can you imagine what would have happened if the kid had won the case?" These comments illustrate the unquestioned view that assaulting children is an integral part of child-adult relationships, that corporal punishment is a right of adults, and that an adult's potential loss of physical power over a child is dangerous.

Corporal punishment has roots in slavery, and its proponents inadvertently retain vestiges of the slave-master ideology when they defend it; for example, "A stick is the only way to make them behave," or "Hitting them is the only way to make them understand." Indeed, it was alleged child-like characteristics of slaves that were often used to justify the practice of flogging them. Corporal punishment is surely a euphemism for flogging when as above a three foot stick is repeatedly used on a little girl by a six foot male teacher.

Assaults on teachers by students have often been used to justify corporal punishment of children at school. This justification is another irrationality, because the issue of self-defense by a teacher against assault by a student is an entirely different issue from the use of corporal punishment in the education of children. Data indicates that those most likely to be hit by teachers are poor, younger, physically disabled, emotionally disturbed, black or Hispanic children (Bakan, 1970; Polier, Alvarez, Broderick, Karrison-Ross and Weaver, 1974). After all, what teacher is going to risk corporally punishing a healthy, husky, high school adolescent of middle or upper socioeconomic class?

Contrary to the assertions of its proponents, corporal punishement is not a necessity in the teaching of children. It has been abolished in the schools of Austria, Belgium, Cyrpus, Denmark, Equador, Finland, France, Holland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Qater, and all Communist bloc nations (Bacon & Hyman, 1979; Reitman, Follmann & Ladd, 1972). It is practiced in such English-speaking countries as Australia and Britain in addition to the United States. Feshbach (1980) reports on a Swedish law explicitly forbidding not only

teachers but parents from striking or humiliating their children, a law which "recognizes the integrity of the child and the child's right (not privilege) to be trained by more positive modes of discipline."

Innumerable investigators have described the harmful consequences of the corporal punishment of children and have suggested development-enhancing, effective, nonviolent alternatives to teaching and discipling children (Bakan, 1971; Button, 1973; Divoky, 1973; Elardo, 1979; Feshbach, 1973; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1973, 1976; Hagebak, 1973; Hyman, 1978, 1979; Kounin, 1970; Ladd, 1972; Lamberth, 1979; Maurer, 1973, 1974; National Education Association, 1972; Sanders & Yarbrough, 1976; Skinner, 1979; Valusek, 1974; Williams, 1980; Wise, 1979).

A host of studies (Gil, 1970; Owens & Straus, 1975; Piele, 1979; Welsh, 1976, 1979) demonstrate a relationship between physical punishment and aggressive behavior. In their classic studies on the effects of parental child rearing practices on children's behavior, Sears, Maccoby & Levin (1957) conclude: "The unhappy effects of punishment have run like a dismal thread through our findings . . . Mothers who punished aggressive behavior severly had more aggressive children than mothers who punished lightly . . . Harsh physical punishment was associated with high childhood aggressiveness." In his analysis of research on punishment, Bongiovanni (1979) enumerates the negative side-effects of corporal punishment which may include modeling the violent behavior of the punisher, emotional and social disruption, and school vandalism. While corporal punishment may result in the temporary suppression of undesired behavior in the presence of the punisher, the punished behavior may continue or intensify in other social contexts. It may also be responded to by retaliation in the absence of the punisher. Such behavior is an illustration of the tenet that violence breeds violence. In addition to the psychosocial problems it generates, corporal punishment often results in medical injury. Pediatricians Friedman & Friedman (1979) report spinal and whiplash injuries, sciatic nerve damage, central nervous system hemorrhage, and blood clots in children who are paddled.

Like other tyrannies, corporal punishment is firmly sustained by a dogmatic assertion that the oppression benefits the victims. It has been contended:

> Of all tyrannies a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims is the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated, but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience (Source Unknown).

Since ancient times, corporal punishment has been practiced on selected groups of vulnerable persons, and its basis in morality has been dogmatically and righteously preached. Over the years reason, justice, and mercy have triumphed over irrationality, injustice, and tyranny. One-hundred years ago

the flogging of sailors was banned. Physical punishment of prisoners and institutionalized mental patients has at least been legally abolished. Employees are no longer whipped, and the beating of animals is outlawed. Physical coercion has given way to nonviolent alternatives in all groups but one: children.

Despite gradually increasing professional and public enlightenment and recommendations to use humane alternatives to the corporal punishment of children, public schools in the United States continue to be a model of violence against the weak by the strong and to contribute to the ever burgeoning violence in American society. Is it any wonder that children, beaten at schools when they are young, bully the weak and vandalize schools when they are older? In the face of reason and manifold evidence, violence against children continues to be endorsed as a means of curbing violence by children.

Paradoxically, proponents of corporal punishment of children are often the very persons who bemoan the violence "in society" and mourn "the death of humanity." But it is the assassins who deliver the funeral oration! For violence and dehumanization will continue to increase in the United States unless we destroy one of their well-nourished roots: corporal punishment of children, the weakest member of the human species and the only group upon whom the infliction of pain and humiliation continues to be legally and socially sanctioned.

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PEOPLE ARE NOT FOR HITTING AND CHILDREN ARE PEOPLE TOO

by John E. Valusek

We live in a nation which is afflicted with a variety of violent acts including those which occur in conjunction with child abuse, wife-beating, assault and battery, rape, riots and murder. To date, nothing we have attempted to do seems to have had much impact on bringing about a reduction in the overall levels of such violence. This extremely complex phenomenon seems to have eluded our best efforts to understand it well enough to tame it and bring it under control. Thus, for many of us, violence has become a source of widespread fear, anger and bewilderment. We wonder where it comes from, why it persists, and what can be done about it.

One familiar response focuses upon the notions that violence is genetic or heriditary in origin, that man is evil by nature, and that human beings are innately programmed to be violently destructive. Another response focuses upon negative influences in the environment including the impact of poverty, broken homes, movies and television, the use of drugs and alcohol, and the massive exposure given to acts of violence by the media.

Perhaps any or all of these factors might contribute to or help explain the high levels of violence in our society. However, is it possible there might be another element which, once recognized, might shed additional light on the problem? I believe so. Therefore, in what follows I will share some personal observations and speculations about this problem, and invite you to judge them according to your own personal experiences.

To begin with, it should be pointed out that the American people believe in the hitting of children. We believe that parents should hit and threaten to hit children at home, and we also believe that educators should hit and threaten to hit children at school. Not only do we believe that hitting children is a good idea, we have learned to justify the need for it and, in fact, have long ago made it a legally and morally approved practice.

In spite of this, however, we rarely acknowledge to ourselves or others that we actually believe in hitting children. Rather, whenever we hit them at home, we have learned to say we are merely "spanking" them or "disciplining" them or "protecting" them from harm. We almost never call our acts of pain-infliction "hittings," but we are hitting nevertheless. In a similar vein, whenever we hit children at school, we seldom recognize or admit that we are hitting them. Instead, school personnel have learned to say they are merely "administering necessary corporal punishment as a last resort for gross misbehavior." They are hitting, nevertheless.

These approved hittings (which must number in the millions) occur in our

society on a daily basis. Should we be surprised to discover that some of the adults are hitting a bit too hard, a bit too often, on too many occasions and for not very sensible reasons? If almost all adults believe children need to be hit and then act upon that belief, common sense will suggest that at least some of these adults will probably hit with excessive force on some occasions.

Once this fact is recognized, it could pose a dilemma for us. How do we intend to reduce or prevent the abusive hittings of certain children in our society while, at the same time, we insist upon the virtue, the value, and the necessity for hitting all children? Perhaps we could resolve this dilemma by teaching parents how to hit their children without abusing them or perhaps we could simply teach all adults never to hit children under any circumstances. The latter course makes the most sense to me but it won't make sense at all to any person who insists that children need to be hit.

I believe most of our failure to cope adequately with violence in our society is actually the result of this confusion about our hitting attitudes and practices. We tend to become angry and fearful about one set of hittings which we call acts of violence while, at the same time, we preach the need for, praise the value of, and legally uphold another set of hittings which we call acts of discipline, teaching, or necessary punishment. Clearly, unless we are willing to work for the elimination of this latter set of approved hittings, we will forever be limited in our efforts to reduce child abuse and any other form of violence, no matter how effective we think our plans and procedures for doing so might be. And, for these reasons, we guarantee that violence will continue to exist among us now and in the future — as it always has in the past. Violence is not inevitable. It exists because it is acceptable, desirable, and practiced faithfully.

My "non-hitting" thesis applies to every act of interpersonal violence we can call to mind. I argue that, regardless of the assumed motives which seem to underlie or explain any given physical attack, all such attacks could and would be reduced or eliminated if the user of such violence had been taught from earliest infancy never, ever, to hit or hurt another human being. No matter that some who attack do so under the influence of alcohol or in a state of rage or temporary insanity or while being subjected to great personal stress. If they had been thoroughly trained and conditioned never to hit, had never seen anyone else hit anyone and had never been hit themselves, they would be most unlikely to attack regardless of the provocation.

Because we, as a nation, have never tried to teach "non-hitting" as a way of life, my proposition appears to be naive and impractical. But why is that? Why is it that we can't teach "non-hitting" as a way of life? Why haven't we done so and what prevents us from doing so? Why does this idea seem so foolish, ridiculous, repellent or impossible? Perhaps, the answer to all of these questions is the same. Each of us has been so accustomed to living in a society where we have been hit, where we have hit others, where we have seen others hit others, and where we have learned to praise and approve of such hittings, that we assume hitting is such a natural part of life. We find it almost

impossible to imagine a world in which such hittings are eliminated. Or, maybe we simply can't seem to connect all the "good" hittings which we believe to be necessary with the "bad" hittings of which we disapprove.

It is simple logic and common sense that we cannot teach people, whoever they might be, that it is wrong to hit while at the same time we are hitting them. We cannot teach that hitting is bad, undesirable and totally unacceptable while we retain state laws which permit school boards to allow teachers or administrators to hit children with sticks, paddles, boards, rubber hoses, cords, and rulers. We cannot teach our developing hitters not to hit others for reasons that make sense to them, while we continue to hit them for reasons that make sense to us.

Thus, it is entirely meaningless to cry out against the horrors of child abuse or to demand protection against rapists, wife-beaters, violent teen-agers and destructive adults. It is not logical to expect these forms of hitting will ever disappear from any society which preaches and teaches the value of hitting children — not only preaches and teaches, but also smiles with approval when that preaching and teaching are converted into action.

We are long overdue in recognizing that human violence is largely learned behavior and that it is one of our earliest learnings. We begin to teach children, often before they learn to speak, that hitting is a necessary and very important part of human existence. Our first lessons are transmitted inadvertently, unintentionally, with our efforts to influence behavior by painful force. It matters not whether we call these efforts spanking, spatting, corporal punishment or hitting. Adults hit children with hands, brushes, rulers, switches, sticks, rolled newspapers, electric cords, broom handles, paddles and a host of other instruments. We hit them in our schools, in our churches and in any other place where children are under the care, authority and direction of adults.

As parents, we hit them because we were hit by our own parents, because we believe they need to be hit, because what we do with our families is our own private business, or because we are so impoverished in our imaginations that we do not believe it is possible to relate with, teach, guide, correct or attempt to modify their behavior in any other way. We hit children in our schools and in our churches and elsewhere for essentially the same reasons: because it suits us to do so, because it is an accepted and highly approved practice, and because we have been so successfully trained to be hitters ourselves.

As a result of these hittings (and the accompanying verbal condemnation or explanations), even a child with the lowest level of intelligence learns the value of hitting. He automatically incorporates this learning within his nervous system, along with the experience of pain, whenever he is hit. He learns that hitting is a useful means of expressing frustration toward anyone who is not responding according to his personal desires. He learns how to become a hitter and how to justify his hittings. He also learns to select a safe target for his

hittings, i.e., someone smaller or weaker than himself. If that's not possible, he learns to use some instrument other than his hand or fist. He learns all of this by direct teaching from the most important adults in his life. Parents provide him with the first lessons in learning how to become a hitter, and school personnel supply the significant reinforcement. Both of these sources for teaching a child to express violence are affirmed by the law, upheld by the courts, and blessed by the churches.

Whether or not a child becomes overtly violent, and how he becomes so, depends upon many other reinforcing elements. But, in all cases, once children have been spanked, slapped or hit in any manner the initial seeds for learning how to become violence-prone have been planted. The extent to which these learnings will develop and be expressed and the form such expression will take, depend upon what else occurs in the child's life. If a child is spanked regularly but not beaten, and also receives an ample supply of affection, positive touch, emotional support, warmth and approval, these ministrations will tend to interfere with the violence-learnings. However, they will not cancel them.

At a minimum, this child, as an adult, will most likely spank his own children and support corporal punishment in the schools. If the hitting lessons occur more frequently or more harshly and no attempt is made to balance them, then such an adult becomes a prime candidate for delinquency, wife-beating, child abuse or other forms of violence. Therefore, the means for bringing about a significant reduction in future violence is almost as easy as saying it. Stop hitting people. Teach everyone, everywhere, of every age that people are not for hitting — and children are people too! Elevate and exalt this teaching as one of our greatest and most noble virtues. Establish it as a new national ethic of supreme importance and accept it as an all-inclusive value.

Such a national ethic means that no one should ever hit another person, for any reason, at any time, in any way. It means that hitting is a way of hurting and that any intentional hurting of another human being should be our greatest source of shame. It means that people should not be hit physically, psychologically, emotionally, or socially. It means that hitting another person is a dehumanizing act committed by a person who has already been partially dehumanized in some manner. It means that full human growth and development cannot become freed of unnecessary restrictions if hitting is being used to foster that developmental process.

Most of us have never considered the idea of attempting to eliminate the practice of hitting children and all others, and because that practice is so firmly established, many of us will find it very hard to conceive of such a possibility. Nevertheless, we already have some precedents to guide us. Long ago we eliminated witch burnings, flogging of seamen by navy captains, and corporal punishment of convicted criminals. Long ago we abandoned cruel mistreatment of the mentally ill, public whippings for a variety of misdemeanors, and abusive third-degree police procedures. We have also established laws against all forms of assault and battery. In other words, we have eliminated all legal

uses of physical pain as a form of punishment against any adult under any circumstance for any reason. However, we still actually encourage the use of hitting against the one segment of our population which is totally dependent upon us and has no recourse — our children. We must now learn to stop the practice of hitting children in our homes, in our schools, in our churches, and throughout society in general. To continue using this unnecessary, thoughtless, and unkind practice is inconsistent with our proclaimed concerns about human rights, human respect, and human dignity.

By itself, the elimination of such hittings can reduce violence-learnings and promote more humane mental health attitudes. In addition, it can help to reduce the confusion created whenever we engage in hitting in the name of love. This confusion involves the entire meaning of all subsequent love relations. Love expressed through pain is destructive to the meaning of love as well as to both the giver and receiver of such pain.

I agree with all those who assert that violence is a complex phenomenon. I believe we must continue to gather and analyze data, and share information about this dreadful, destructive behavior. But, while doing all that — for the sake of the children and families and society and in the name of human compassion and sanity — let us also proclaim the need to stop hitting people, including children. By so doing, we will not only establish a mentally healthier atmosphere in which to live but will also initiate a way of life in which violence in general has less and less reason to exist. As a consequence, a host of new learnings will arise which can lead to a more humane, a more tolerant, and a more loving society.

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